

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 150015Z MAR 74

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1504

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 436

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU,
MILITIA AND MILITARY

1. DURING MARCH 14 CONVERSATION WITH SOVIET EMBASSY
COUNSELOR CHUKHROV, USLO OFFICER ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ON PROBABLE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU, THE URBAN MILITIA
AND THE PLA. CHUKHROV QUICKLY WARMED TO THE SUBJECT SAYING THAT,
ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, A CHANGE IN CONTROL HAD TAKEN PLACE
NEAR THE END OF LAST YEAR. CONTROL OF MILITIA, HE SAID, IS NOW IN
THE HANDS OF "PEOPLE'S ARMAMENT GROUPS" WHO IN TURN ARE
CONTROLLED BY PARTY BRANCHES AND THE LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY
COMMITTEES. (USLO OFFICER VISITING LOYANG IN LATE DECEMBER
ALSO NOTED SIGNS ON BUILDINGS WHICH READ "JEN MIN WU CHUANG PU,"
OR "PEOPLE'S ARMAMENT UNIT OR GROUP.") THE ARMY IS STILL
RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING AND FOR PROVISION OF WEAPONS, BUT THE
PARTY CONTROLS POLICY. SIMILARLY, THE PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU,
WHICH PREVIOUSLY HAD REPORTED TO THE STATE COUNCIL BUT WAS
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LARGELY CONTROLLED BY THE MILITARY, IS NOW DIRECTLY CONTROLLED

BY THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THUS, HE SAID, THE MILITIA AND THE PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU HAVE BEEN MOVED INTO A CLOSER COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP.

2. CHUKHROV SAID HE NOW HAS INFORMATION THAT IS "VERY FIRM" CONCERNING THE ALLEGED ASSASSINATION OF PUBLIC SECURITY MINISTER LI CHEN LATE LAST YEAR. ACCORDING TO CHUKHROV, LI WAS KILLED IN HIS OFFICE AT THE MINISTRY ALONG WITH AT LEAST THREE OTHERS INCLUDING HIS PERSONAL SECRETARY AND HIS BODYGUARD.

3. COMMENT: THERE HAS BEEN RECURRENT SPECULATION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE MILITIA, PARTICULARLY THE URBAN MILITIA, AS AN ALTERNATE MEANS OF CONTROL TO THE PLA WHICH ASSUMED THE ROLE DURING THE UPHEAVALS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. BOTH THE MILITIA AND THE PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU SEEM TO HAVE BEEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILITARY. LI CHEN, OF COURSE, IS A MILITARY COMMANDER WITH LONG SERVICE IN THE NORHTEAST WHO MOVED INTO THE PSB IN 1967. ONE POSSIBLE SUPPORTING INDICATOR THAT THE MILITARY IS BEING DOWNGRADED IN THESE AREAS WAS THE RECENT REMOVAL OF A SIGN FROM A PEKING BUILDING, ONE SIDE OF WHICH READ "PEKING MUNICIPAL MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE" AND DOWN THE OTHER "PEKING MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU". THERE NOW REMAINS ONLY A PUBLIC SECURITY BUREAU SIGN. WHILE WE VIEW CHUKHROV'S INFORMATION WITH RESERVE, WE THINK IT CONCEIVABLE THAT A STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER PUBLIC SECURITY AND MILITIA ORGANIZATIONS MAY HAVE TAKEN PLACE LATE LAST YEAR. IF SO, THE STORIES OF LI CHEN'S ASSASSINATION BECOME SOMEWHAT MORE PLAUSIBLE.

JENKINS

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